United Nations A/C.5/54/34

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 November 1999

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Fifth Committee
Agenda items 121 and 47

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/54/L.24/Rev.1

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Summary

As indicated in section III of the present statement, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/54/L.24/Rev.1, requirements of $187,700 would arise under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/206 of 18 December 1998, decided that a provision of $86,200,000 should be reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 for special political missions. Should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/54/L.24/Rev.1, the estimated requirements of $187,700 would be charged against the $86.2 million provision (which is equivalent to $90,387,200 after recosting) proposed for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

99-35557 (E) 221199

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions, the General Assembly authorized provisions for additional staff for 1992 and 1993 in support of the Central American peace process pursuant to resolutions 46/109 A of 17 December 1991 and 47/118 of 18 December 1992, respectively. Reflecting the expanded support activities required under its resolutions 48/161 of 20 December 1993 and 49/137 of 19 December 1994, the Assembly authorized for 1995 the continuation of that provision for the additional staff. In view of the continued support activities required under its resolutions 50/132 of 20 December 1995 and 51/198 B of 27 March 1997, the Assembly authorized in 1996 and 1997 the continuation of those provisions for additional staff approved in 1995. In the implementation of Assembly resolution 52/176 of 18 December 1997, the Assembly authorized the provision of resources for two staff (one at the P-4 level and one at the General Service level) for 1998. The extension of those resources through 1999 was authorized by the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 53/94 of 7 December 1998. The current proposals reflect the maintenance in 2000 of those resources authorized for 1999.

II. Draft resolution A/54/L.24/Rev.1

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

2. By operative paragraphs 7 and 14 of draft resolution A/54/L.24/Rev.1, the General Assembly would:

(a) Request the Secretary-General, the bodies and programmes of the United Nations system and the international community to continue to support and verify in Guatemala the implementation of all the peace agreements signed under United Nations auspices, compliance with which was an essential condition for a firm and lasting peace in that country;

(b) Request the Secretary-General to continue to lend his full support to the initiatives and activities of the Central American Governments, particularly their efforts to consolidate peace and democracy through the implementation of a new, comprehensive sustainable development programme and the initiative to establish the Central American Union, emphasizing, *inter alia*, the potential repercussions of natural disasters, in particular of hurricane Mitch, for the peace processes and the vulnerable economies of the region, and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution.

B. Relationship of the proposed request to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

3. The above request relates to subprogramme 1.1, Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, of programme 1, Political affairs, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.[1]

C. Activities by which the proposed request would be implemented

4. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would, with respect to the requests outlined in paragraph 2 above:

(a) Continue to provide good offices, as required, as well as substantive support and political guidance to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) in the fulfilment of its mandate;

(b) Continue the provision of verification and good offices functions in the implementation of pending issues of the peace agenda in El Salvador in full cooperation with the United Nations resident coordinator for El Salvador, who is also the representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the area;

(c) Continue to lend full support to the initiatives and activities of the Central American Governments, particularly in their efforts to consolidate peace and democracy through the implementation of a new, comprehensive sustainable development programme and the initiative to establish the Central American Union.

D. Requirements at full cost

5. The destruction caused by hurricane Mitch in October 1998 required a comprehensive approach to recovery so as to address the underlying structural problems that exacerbated the impact of that natural disaster. As part of an inter-agency task force, the United Nations will continue to follow this process closely to ensure that the reconstruction/transformation efforts after Mitch contribute to the consolidation of peace and development in the Central American region.

6. The peace agreements signed in Guatemala in 1996 provided the basis for a multifaceted mandate entrusted by the General Assembly to MINUGUA, namely: verification, good offices, advisory services and public information. MINUGUA has also played a leading role, together with the other parts of the United Nations system and the international community at large, in a multifaceted exercise in peace-building. Important challenges still lie ahead, complicated by the delays suffered in implementation of the third phase contemplated in the peace agreements as well as by the fact that a new Government will take office in January 2000.

7. In El Salvador, the United Nations remains committed to the consolidation of the peace-building process, in full cooperation with UNDP in its task of assisting the Government of El Salvador in the final implementation of the pending issues of the 1992 peace agreements.

8. It is anticipated that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, adequate support for all the above aspects of the efforts of the Secretary-General in Central America should be provided. This would require the continuation in 2000 of the provision of related resources equivalent to one staff member at the P-4 level, for a Political Affairs Officer, and one staff member at the General Service level.

9. The Political Affairs Officer (P-4) would be assigned primarily to monitor the peace process and significant political developments in Guatemala and to provide backstopping and political guidance to the post-conflict peace-building activities of MINUGUA. Regarding El Salvador, the Officer will assist in the joint UNDP/United Nations follow-up programme to ensure compliance with the provisions of the 1992 peace agreement with regard to the remaining issues from that agreement. He/she will follow developments in the region as a whole. When necessary, the Officer will attend the United Nations inter-agency task force for the reconstruction and transformation of Central America and will coordinate activities with field offices of the United Nations system. He/she would also brief and disseminate information to missions, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations currently interested in the peace process in Central America.

10. The estimated costs related to the salaries and common staff costs of the staff indicated in paragraph 8 above would amount to $187,700.

III. Action required from the General Assembly

11. The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/206 of 18 December 1998, decided that a provision of $86,200,000 should be included for special political missions related to peace and security expected to be extended or approved during the course of the biennium 2000-2001. Provisions for such missions had previously been included in the budget section for peacekeeping operations. They are now included in the budget section for political affairs to reflect the responsibility of the substantive department concerned and to be fully consistent with the structure of the medium-term plan. As indicated in table 3.23 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001,[2] the provision of $86,200,000, after recosting, is equivalent to $90,387,200. As described in paragraph 3.89 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, the utilization of the amount would be subject to individual legislative mandates and approval by the General Assembly as and when the Security Council and/or the General Assembly established or renewed the mandates of such missions.

12. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/54/L.24/Rev.1, the requirements of $187,700 would be charged against the provision of $90,387,200 for special political missions requested in section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/53/6/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/54/6/Rev.1), vol. II.